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Safety Training; First Aid Bills Passed *Athletic Coaches Required to be Certified*

LANSING - The Michigan Senate took a major step forward in continuing to protect our state's children with the passage of Senate Bill 205. The bill requires school coaches to be certified in sports safety training.

SB 205, sponsored by Senate Majority Floor Leader Beverly Hammerstrom, R-Temperance, was introduced in an effort to prepare coaches when faced with an injury or potential emergency situation.

"Currently, there is no safety training requirement for coaches, yet they often are the first responders to an injury during practice or games," said Senator Hammerstrom. "It makes sense to ensure that they possess the proper skills to offer assistance, whether the situation is a minor injury or serious emergency."

The legislation mandates that any individual seeking to coach after July 1, 2007 must be certified in sports safety training before a school could hire them.

SB 205 also establishes that a person who is certified and performs physical aid on another person is not liable for damages, making them consistent with the Good Samaritan Law. In addition, SB 205 exempts coaches who may also be doctors, nurses and other emergency personnel from receiving the additional training. The bill was passed by the Senate unanimously and is currently in the House Committee on Education.